

“Teach a man to fish”: a case study of entrepreneurship education in conflict-ridden Maiduguri, Nigeria

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Summary: The abduction in April 2014 of more than 250 school girls in Chibok, a small town near Maiduguri Nigeria, drew international attention to the scale of terror unleashed by the dreaded Boko Haram in the region. Stakeholders have recognised the urgent need to tackle the twin problems of poverty and youth unemployment, which are especially high in the region and are associated with high rates of terrorist recruitment. This case study draws from in-depth interviews of key personnel and trainees, as well as memos and documents, to examine how the entrepreneurship education offered by a new centre at the University of Maiduguri is contributing to employment generation and conflict mitigation. Our findings reveal that entrepreneurship education is making significant impact, but upscaling will require additional support through venture capital for nascent entrepreneurs.

Track 5: Entrepreneurship

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“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime” (Anonymous)

1. Introduction

Within the framework of United Nations global development agenda, there is a growing shift in emphasis from the traditional reliance on aid to a new strategy of entrepreneurial support and empowerment through education to address the problems of poverty and unemployment, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. In its post-2015 agenda for sustainable development, the United Nations has outlined a plan to substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant entrepreneurial and vocational skills for employment by 2030 (United Nations, 2015). To achieve this, countries are encouraged to focus their efforts on “...development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services” (United Nations, 2015, pp. 19). Ahead of the 2015 Global Entrepreneurship Summit, United States president Barack Obama remarked in an interview with BBC that developing countries were no longer “interested in just being patrons- or being patronised. And being given aid. They are interested in building capacity” (Obama 2015).

Entrepreneurship research has focused increasing attention in recent years on the role of entrepreneurship education on poverty reduction (Bruton et al. 2013; Tobias et al. 2013). Previously, entrepreneurship was associated mainly with high wealth creation amongst big businesses and corporations, mostly in developed countries (Hitt et al. 2001; Venkataraman 2015). Generally speaking, business enterprises have traditionally struggled in developing countries as they grapple with the challenge of smaller markets, low consumption, weak institutions and derelict infrastructures generally associated with poor regions (Seelos & Mair 2007). In addition to these challenges, conflict environments are pervasive in Africa and these present aspiring entrepreneurs with additional difficulties associated with higher risk, market disruptions and overall volatility due to violence and lawlessness (Anderson et al. 2010; Bruck et al. 2013). This study explores the case of entrepreneurship education and enterprise development in Maiduguri, Northeast Nigeria, an area that has been long characterised by widespread poverty and high rates of unemployment. This intervention is a product of knowledge transfer partnership between the Centre for African Entrepreneurship and Leadership (CAEL) at the University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom and the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development (CEED) at the University of Maiduguri, Nigeria. In the past decade, Maiduguri has witnessed the rise and spread of Boko Haram terrorist activity, starting from Maiduguri and spreading to the rest of Northern Nigeria. We examined if and how entrepreneurship education has facilitated enhanced entrepreneurial skills, promoted entrepreneurial intentions, and contributed to poverty reduction through the birth of new businesses that are capable of generating incomes and creating jobs.

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From the foregoing, our research questions (depicted in the conceptual framework in figure 1) are as follows:

- i. How can entrepreneurship education promote increased awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities and enhanced entrepreneurial skills in a conflict environment like Maiduguri?
- ii. How can entrepreneurial awareness and high skill development contribute to the growth and expansion of income generating and job creating ventures?

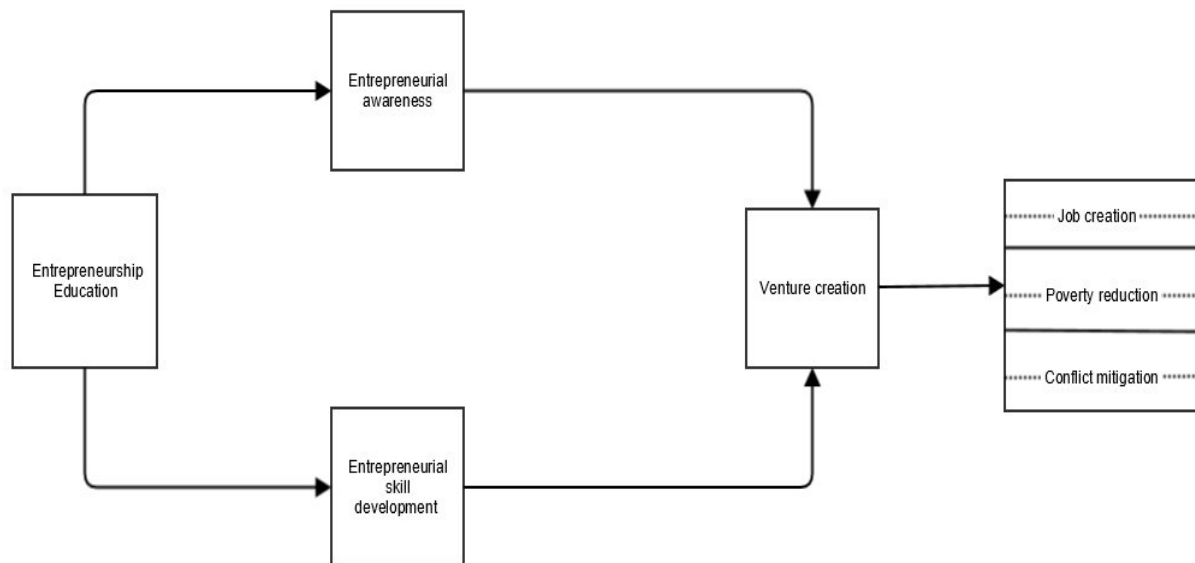


Figure 1: Entrepreneurship education, poverty reduction & conflict mitigation

The rest of the paper is organised as follows. First we present a description of the research context in Maiduguri Nigeria, a deprived area that has been under the attack of terrorists for many years. Next we provide an overview of the literature on entrepreneurship education, poverty alleviation and the peculiarities of entrepreneurial activities in conflict zones, followed by a discussion of the Nigerian government’s policy on entrepreneurship education. We then present our research methodology before a detailed discussion and analysis of interview transcripts, memos and other relevant documents about the activities of the entrepreneurship centre at the University of Maiduguri. We conclude with an outline of policy implications and recommendations for future studies.

2. Research context

Borno State, established by the federal military government in 1976, is one of the 36 states in Nigeria. With an estimated population of 5.2 million and a landmass of 61,435km², it is the largest state by landmass in Nigeria. Borno State is located in the Northeastern part of the country and lies between latitudes 100 and 140 N, and longitudes 110 30' and 140 45' E (University of Maiduguri 2009). It is bordered by Niger Republic to the North, Chad to the North East, and Cameroon to the East. Within Nigeria, it shares borders with other Northeastern states of Adamawa, Yobe and Gombe states. Maiduguri is the capital city of

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Borno and the largest city in Northeastern Nigeria, covering an area of 543km², and with an estimated population of 1 million (Mayomi & Mohammed 2014).

In 2002, the terrorist group Boko Haram was formed in Maiduguri by radical cleric Mohammed Yusuf. Its official name is *Jamaatu Ahlus-SunnahLidda Awati Wal Jihad*, the Arabic for “People Committed to The Prophet’s Teachings for Propagation and Jihad”. Its popular name, Boko Haram, derives from its core teaching that western education is forbidden (Adesoji 2010). In April 2014, Boko Haram abducted more than 250 school girls from Chibok, about 80 miles from Maiduguri in Northeast Nigeria (Peters 2014). Their whereabouts is still unknown. Analysts have pointed out that the emergence and growth of Boko Haram is closely associated with exceptionally high levels of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment in Nigeria, and Northeast Nigeria in particular (Salaam 2012; Rogers 2012). Official figures indicate that the Northeast region of Nigeria is the most deprived in terms of poverty, unemployment, and education access (World Bank 2013; National Bureau of Statistics 2012), and these have been identified as the most significant risk factors contributing to the spread of Boko Haram insurgency.

In response to this challenge, the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development (CEED) was set up in 2012 at the University of Maiduguri. The objectives of the centre are to:

- Create and promote entrepreneurial awareness and opportunities.
- Nurture the talents and ideas of students to create and sustain businesses so that they emerge as business owners with professional skills.
- Enhance the capacity of potential and practising entrepreneurs who have the desire to learn practical entrepreneurial skills.
- Encourage the creative application of knowledge acquired in the University.
- Offer, through academic programmes, practical hands-on education in entrepreneurship and service-learning activities within the community and the region.
- Provide students with the necessary skills to think creatively, to successfully launch their own businesses, or to support an employer in launching and growing an entrepreneurial venture.
- Develop in the students the ability to take advantage of Venture Capital for ideas generated by them.
- Offer mentoring and consultancy services to small and medium scale enterprises within and outside the catchment area of the University.
- Transfer research efforts from the laboratory to the marketplace and thus, promote successful clusters of entrepreneurial businesses
- Stimulate the development and growth of entrepreneurship in the north east sub-region and Nigeria at large.
- Make University of Maiduguri the bedrock for developing, testing and actualising creative entrepreneurial skills within the nation’s socioeconomic environment (Sugaba 2015).

A number of recent studies have explored the impact of entrepreneurship education on poverty reduction in developing countries (Brixiova 2010; Agupusi 2007). This paper seeks to contribute to this growing body of knowledge by examining a case of entrepreneurship education in a deprived, conflict-ridden environment of Northeast Nigeria, an area which has been ravaged for years by the Boko Haram terrorist group. Specifically, this paper builds on

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the theory of specialised human capital proposed by Alvarez & Barney (2014), by exploring how entrepreneurship education delivered to university undergraduates can contribute to entrepreneurial awareness and entrepreneurial skills, which in turn contribute to new venture creation. Furthermore, this case study illuminates the fledging theory of transformative entrepreneuring in conflict environments (Tobias et al. 2013), by focusing on how entrepreneurship education is helping young people to survive, cope, and thrive in the midst of insurgency violence.

3. Literature review

3.1 Entrepreneurship education and poverty alleviation

Traditionally, much of entrepreneurship research has been about how innovative, risk taking entrepreneurs facilitate high wealth growth, typically in developed countries (Bruton et al. 2013; Hitt et al. 2001). In recent years, the entrepreneurship literature has focused increasing attention on the impact of entrepreneurship on poverty reduction. It has been argued that profit-oriented entrepreneurs in developed countries often have less incentive to enter international markets with abject poverty, due to overwhelming inefficiencies arising from unknown and unpredictable externalities (Alvarez & Barney, 2014). In these sorts of abject poverty contexts, the role of social entrepreneurs becomes more important as a bridge between private sector participation and government contribution in poverty reduction initiatives (Tobias et al. 2013; Mair & Marti 2009). These social entrepreneurs “create new models for services and products that cater directly to basic human needs that remain unsatisfied by current economic or social institutions” (Seelos & Mair, 2005, pp. 243-244).

Typically, discussions of social entrepreneurship has focused on the activities of various NGOs and charitable organisations, as well as micro-finance institutions who step into abject poverty contexts to provide support and interventions to capacitate the poor to take advantage of opportunities for self-employment, in their bid to escape the poverty trap (Mair & Marti 2006; Weerawardena & Mort 2006). Conversely, there is little attention on how universities and other educational institutions can fulfil these key functions of social entrepreneurs, say by promoting entrepreneurial awareness and new venture creation.

Alvarez & Barney, (2014) identified three key pre-requisites for entrepreneurial activity: human capital, property rights, and access to financial capital. This may well be reduced to two key components- human capital and financial capital, considering that property right is closely associated with access to financial capital (De-Soto 2000). Human Capital can be further broken into two sub-components: general human capital, and special human capital. The former is usually associated with formal general education, especially at the basic levels, but also including further and higher education. From the entrepreneurial standpoint, special human capital incorporates specific sets of skills required for an entrepreneur to organise and manage a business venture. These sets of skills, including business planning, risk analysis, marketing, and customer service skills are provided in various entrepreneurship education programmes (Jones & English 2004).

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The qualities of human capital and financial capital available to individuals are generally associated with different levels of entrepreneurial opportunities. The lowest, most basic level of entrepreneurial opportunity is self-employment. The next level is discovery, and the highest level is creation. Some scholars have suggested that the impact of entrepreneurship on poverty alleviation is mixed because, in abject poverty contexts, the poor generally lack the required level of human capital, as well as financial capital to harness higher levels of entrepreneurial opportunities beyond self-employment (Alvarez & Barney 2014; Eckhardt & Shane 2003). This underscores, once again, the crucial role of entrepreneurship training.

While poverty is generally associated with illiteracy and low levels of human capital development, and prosperity with high levels of human capital development, there is need for empirical investigations of peculiar examples like Nigeria (see section 3.3) where increasing levels of university graduate turnout is associated with higher levels of poverty and unemployment in the last few decades. A number of scholars have observed that this phenomenon presents a strong case for comprehensive reform in order to improve the quality of further and higher education. Others have further argued that there is an urgent need, nationally, for a change of mindset among university graduates, who have generally been imbued with the idea that opportunities exist for them only in formal employments, usually in the overcrowded public sector. Given their considerable level of human capital, the question often arises as to why these university graduates have not been able to harness entrepreneurial opportunities to generate wealth and create jobs.

In this paper, we argue that entrepreneurship education- or lack thereof- may explain the incongruity of the significant level of human capital inherent in university graduates and the high level of poverty and graduate unemployment. In other words, without the special human capital provided in entrepreneurship education, general human capital in and of itself may be inadequate to move university graduates to the level of awareness and skill acquisition required to discover opportunities and create new ventures. There is therefore a need for higher educational institutions in a context like Nigeria's to embrace the specific functions of social entrepreneurs by teaching and equipping graduates for entrepreneurial opportunities.

For this particular brand of entrepreneurship education to be successful, it has to reflect, and draw on, clear understanding of local contexts. For example, an entrepreneurship education programme being run in a country like United Kingdom cannot be adopted wholesale in a country like Nigeria. In addition to the abject poverty context, the most significant local context that has to be considered is conflict and terrorism, which has become endemic in Nigeria in recent years.

3.2 Entrepreneurship in conflict zones

There is considerable attention in the literature on how entrepreneurs can explore and exploit investment and growth opportunities in base of the economic pyramid (BOP) contexts characterised by deep and widespread poverty and low-income consumers (Seelos & Mair 2007; Pitta et al. 2008). Among other things, scholars have observed that businesses can

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achieve the dual goal of making profit and alleviating poverty by building new resources and capabilities and forging new partnerships in BOP markets (Seelos & Mair 2007). In other words, they can combine the roles and goals of commercial and social entrepreneurs. However, conflict zones present a peculiar set of challenges for entrepreneurs. In addition to extreme poverty and low consumption associated with BOP contexts, markets in conflict zones are often characterised by lack of functioning legal systems, absence of key infrastructures, shortage of skilled people, and overall volatility associated with violence, lawlessness and criminality (Anderson et al. 2010; Bruck et al. 2013).

A number of recent entrepreneurship studies have highlighted the impacts of conflicts on entrepreneurial activities, as well as the impact of entrepreneurs on conflict. Bruck et al., (2013) observed that the impacts of wars and conflicts on infrastructures, market stability and other macro-economic outcomes negatively affect entrepreneurial opportunities for profitable investments. Entrepreneurs in these environments have to grapple with higher transaction costs, higher risks and the challenge of disrupted, smaller markets (Czinkota et al. 2010). In spite of these challenges, or perhaps because of them, entrepreneurs in conflict zones generally manifest higher levels of resilience, tenacity, and ingenuity. Resilient entrepreneurs tend to be optimistic in the face of setbacks, and they are highly resourceful in overcoming or changing difficult situations to their advantage (Bullough et al. 2014).

Whereas conditions in conflict zones appear unfavourable to starting and growing new ventures, many scholars and observers have reported higher levels of entrepreneurial activities in these volatile environments. This phenomenon has been explained in terms of paucity of formal, salaried jobs and the survivalist tendencies of people living in conflict zones. In the absence of paid employment, people are driven by necessity into self-employment in their struggle for survival (Bruck et al. 2013).

Entrepreneurship can also have transformative effect on conflict situations. Wars, conflicts and terrorism do not only destroy key infrastructures and disrupt markets; they also erode trust between members of ethnic and religious groups who are parties to the conflict. Indeed, it can be argued that conflicts are sustained and aggravated by this erosion of trust, whereas entrepreneurial activities rely heavily on trust between various participants and stakeholders in the market chain. As the typical entrepreneur seeks to expand their customer base and explore new markets, they are compelled in the search for profit to undertake transactions with people outside their immediate in-group- ethnic or religious. These entrepreneurial transactions provide the opportunities to rebuild and develop trust, thereby reducing transaction costs as well as lowering prejudice towards members of the outgroup (Tobias et al. 2013). This transformative impact has been observed in the case of the Rwandan coffee sector, where economic liberalisation and enhanced entrepreneurial activities were found to be associated with not just economic growth but positive social change among the populace (Tobias & Boudreaux 2011). Strong (2009) also reported similar impact in Northern Ireland, where increased economic freedom and high growth of indigenous entrepreneurial activities led to violence reduction and contributed significantly to end decades of war.

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While these recent studies have examined how conflict situations affect, and are affected by, entrepreneurship, there is need for further evidence and insights about the processes by which these transformations take place. As each conflict situation is peculiar and different regions of the world present unique challenges and realities, a case study approach like this provides deeper insights about the nuances and complex dynamics of entrepreneurial activities in conflict situations. Of particular interest in this paper is the role of entrepreneurship education in developing special human capital- entrepreneurial skills- as well as cultivating resilience and promoting entrepreneurial intentions amid Boko Haram terrorist violence in northeast Nigeria. In order to properly undertake this study, it is important to understand the national contexts in which the intervention in Maiduguri, Nigeria, is being undertaken. Therefore, the following section provides an overview of the circumstances in which the Nigerian government launched a new intervention on entrepreneurship education as part of its national policy on education.

3.3 Nigeria: a new agenda for entrepreneurship education

When the civilian administration of Olusegun Obasanjo assumed power in 1999, Nigeria had been under four military governments for 16 years. The education sector had suffered significantly, and the new administration embarked on a series of interventions to address the problems in the sector (Adediran 2015). In addition to setting up the Universal Basic Education, which covers the first 9 years of education, the new government produced a blue print to revamp technical and vocational education in the country. In addition, there were various consultations with stakeholders to reposition higher education in the country (Federal Ministry of Education 2001; Federal Ministry of Education 2003).

Since the start of the fourth republic in 1999, the number of higher institutions, and the number of students enrolled in them, has increased significantly. This is partly due to government's liberalisation of the higher education sector, and the attendant licensing of private universities. For example, between 2003 and 2007 alone, the number of universities in Nigeria grew from 53 in 2003 to 128 (Akinyemi et al. 2012; Clark & Ausukuya 2013). Accordingly, student enrolment and graduate turnout have grown considerably over the years, with university enrolment increasing from 780,001 in 2005 to 1,013,337 in 2009 (Shu'ara 2010).

In spite of the increasing level of graduate turn out in Nigeria, unemployment and poverty have remained very high, and graduate unemployment in particular has worsened in recent years. According to official statistics, unemployment rate increased from 11% in 2006, to 24% in 2011, and a great number of those employed are under-employed (World Bank 2013). The group mostly affected by the unemployment crisis is the youth, with one report estimating that the unemployment rate among the Nigerian youth is at least three times the national composite average, and three times the average rate for other sub-Saharan African countries (Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity 2011). Moreover, it has been

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estimated that about 71% of the Nigerian population are living in relative poverty (Rogers 2012).

Graduate unemployment constitute a significant part of overall youth unemployment in Nigeria, and it is an especially disturbing statistics considering one of the key objectives of universities is to produce graduates with requisite knowledge and skills to fill the manpower needs of the national economy (Federal Ministry of Education 2008). A recent assessment of the quality assurance process in Nigerian universities has revealed significant, sometimes drastic, reduction in quality of student recruitment processes, examinations, and staff appointment and promotion, among others (Okebukola 2010). These were especially noticeable from the 1990s, and some have attributed the trend to governments’ reduced attention and investment on education, and the associated phenomenon of “brain drain”, with many academics leaving Nigeria for greener pastures overseas (Federal Ministry of Education 2003). Increasingly in recent years, employers have complained about troubling un-employability of Nigerian graduates. Investigators have reported that a growing number of the Nigerian university graduates are weak in analytical and communication skills, and are especially deficient in entrepreneurial skills (Akinyemi et al. 2012; Pitan & Adedjeji 2012). A summary of key findings on factors influencing graduate unemployment is given in table 1.

Table 1 Factors influencing graduate unemployment in Nigeria

Authors	Key findings
(Akinyemi et al. 2012; Asuquo & Agboola 2014; Pitan & Adedjeji 2012)	Most Nigerian graduates are lacking in employable skills that matches with job requirements in the current labour market.
(Eneji et al. 2013; Johanson & Adams 2004; The World Bank 2015)	The education curriculum appear to be static and behind the times with respect to changing dynamics of globalisation and technological innovation in the work place. Employers are continually adjusting their requirements. Higher institutions should keep pace with changing times.
(Federal Ministry of Education 2002)	The formal and public sectors have very low capacity to absorb new entrants to the labour market
(Shadare & Elegbede 2012; Akinyemi et al. 2012)	Government policy, economic recession and employment of expatriates aggravate high level of unemployment. Other researchers have countered that employment of expatriates is due at least in part to lack of quality local graduates to fill the places.
(Venatus V & Ikwuba 2010)	Employment is popularly conceived by graduates and higher institutions as "working for someone" else. This paradigm, which needs to change, currently underpins much of curriculum content and delivery, which is generally geared towards preparing students for formal sector jobs.

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In the light of the foregoing, the Federal Government of Nigeria embarked on a new education intervention project 2002. At the heart of this intervention was the entrepreneurship education reform that seeks to “reorient young people enrolled in VOTEC and tertiary level institutions towards self-employment and entrepreneurship, and thereby promote an enterprise culture” (Federal Ministry of Education 2002).

4. Methodology

The epistemological approach in this case study is described as positivist and deductive. In other words, unlike grounded theory and inductive approaches, the research questions were well defined in advance of data collection (Rowley 2002), the units and interactions in the theory were clearly spelt out (Shanks 2002), and the study uses data from the field to test and build on theory in the extant literature (Iacono et al. 2011). This paper focuses on a single case study, rather than multiple case studies, of an entrepreneurship education intervention in Northeast Nigeria. Rowley (2002) observed that whereas multiple case studies are generally preferred, a single case is desirable where it is “extreme, unique, or has something special to reveal” (pp.21). We judge that this case described in this study is indeed unique, and has something special to reveal about how entrepreneurship education can contribute to skill development and new venture creation in a conflict, terror-laden environment. Further details of the research context are provided in section 2 above.

4.1 Data collection

This study draws from two of the six possible sources of evidence for case studies by Yin (2013), namely interviews and documents. In addition to data gleaned from documents and memos, we conducted rounds of in-depth interviews with key personnel involved with the knowledge transfer partnership that led to the establishment of the entrepreneurship centre (CEED) at the University of Maiduguri. Specifically, we interviewed the former director, Dr Aliyu Sugaba, and current acting director of the centre, Dr Mohammed Madawaki, and the heads of units who came with the director for series of intensive training at the University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom. In addition, we interviewed two Business Solutions specialists from the University of Wolverhampton who were directly involved with the partnership- Mr Nigel Birch and Ms Rebecca McDonalds. They spent several weeks with the partners at the University of Maiduguri and more months of intensive training at the University of Wolverhampton. We also interviewed two senior academics at the University of Wolverhampton who, in addition to providing training for the Maiduguri team, were heavily involved in the process of developing a new and suitable entrepreneurship curriculum for CEED. Finally, we conducted in-depth interviews of six randomly selected trainees from the list of 45 trainees who benefitted from the pilot intervention launched at the University of Maiduguri in 2013. Respondents were asked to describe their overall experience of the training programme, and their views about the impact of the insurgency on the region and on their own lives and livelihoods. They were also asked if and how the entrepreneurship

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training has helped them to set up and grow their businesses, and whether and how they think similar intervention can help tackle poverty and youth unemployment in the region. The audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed and fed into NVivo 10, where the following nodes were generated in an iterative process, to cover key themes highlighted by the respondents: access to good education; benefits from training; Boko Haram and gender issues; poverty and joblessness; business details; entrepreneurship and poverty reduction; entrepreneurship and women empowerment; entrepreneurship culture; future business plans; and government support and responsibility.

4.2 Data analysis

This paper uses a combination of pattern matching and explanation building to analyse our case study evidence (Baškarada 2014; Yin 2013). This strengthens the internal validity of the data, and enables us to compare and contrast the observed patterns in the field data with predicted patterns in the extant literature (Tellis 1997; Almutairi et al. 2014). In this respect we adopt a process theory, which specifies that a number of conditions must follow in a temporal order to achieve the expected outcome (Hak & Dul 2009). Therefore this paper adopts a thematic coding system to examine if and how entrepreneurship education has generated increased awareness and skill development, and if and how entrepreneurship intention and new venture creation has been influenced by this awareness and entrepreneurial skill, as specified in the literature (see table 2). To build on the existing theory, we further examine if knowledge partnership- exemplified by the CAEL/CEED partnership is a sufficient antecedent to improved entrepreneurship education.

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Table 2: pattern matching of predicted and observed impacts of entrepreneurship education

Variable	Predicted pattern	Observed pattern
<i>Type of entrepreneurship education (EE)</i>	Several typologies of EE exist. Liñán (2004) identified 4 main types of EE: entrepreneurship awareness, education for start-up, education for entrepreneurial dynamism, and continuing education for entrepreneurs. Other scholars have highlighted a number of main approaches to EE- "learning by doing" or "experiential learning", and the conventional, classroom based approach, also known as modular knowledge-based delivery ((Fayolle et al. 2006; Smith & Paton 2014).	The EE programme at Maiduguri focuses mainly on generating awareness about entrepreneurial opportunities for students in an environment where formal, salaried employment is hard to get and graduate unemployment is very high. The centre (CEED) also focuses on developing students' transferable entrepreneurial skills in business planning, marketing and customer retention skills, among others. Pedagogically, CEED's combines both class-room based approach and learning by doing method, both in training and in assessment. The centre places strong emphasis on developing practical skills in various fields of engineering, fabric and fashion designing, ICT, etc.
<i>Entrepreneurial awareness</i>	Entrepreneurship education can contribute to greater awareness of the entrepreneurial environment, thereby informing or modifying perception about entrepreneurship as a career and vocation (Liñán 2004). Participation in entrepreneurial start-up courses often leads to increased level of entrepreneurial intention, but this may well be due to self-selection bias of entrepreneurial minded students enrolling in the course.	CEED's EE programme appears to contribute to high levels of entrepreneurial awareness of students. The student respondents spoke clearly of the significant difference between their perceived low levels of awareness prior to participating in the course, compared with significantly higher levels of awareness at the end of the course. Specifically, several students highlighted their increased awareness and knowledge of business strategies. The problem of self-selection is mitigated in this case study, as the entrepreneurship is compulsory (through government legislation) for all students at the University of Maiduguri, whether or not they have entrepreneurial interests.
<i>Entrepreneurial development</i>	<i>skill</i> Entrepreneurship Education programmes are generally considered to be effective in developing transferable skills in participants, although this is often associated with how a particular EE programme is designed and implemented (Smith & Paton 2014). In societies with high levels of youth unemployment, there is a particularly strong case for entrepreneurship education intervention aimed at addressing shortage of skills among nascent and potential entrepreneurs (Brixiová et al. 2015).	The interviewees stated that the entrepreneurial training helped them to acquire innovative marketing skills suited to the challenges and volatility of a conflict environment. Others highlighted business plan writing, record keeping, customer mobilisation skills, and other aspects of business management skills. In addition to these, students acquired vocational skills in at least one of several vocational areas which include fabrics/fashion designing, ICT/Computer servicing and repairs, bakery, pure water production, etc. At the end of the course they were subjected to both written and practical assessment, to certify their mastery of the skills.

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Venture creation

Entrepreneurship education can influence attitudes and behaviours which mould entrepreneurial intentions. In turn, intention is an important antecedent of new venture creation ((Krueger et al. 2000; Liñán 2004). These intention models draw from the theory of planned behaviour, which proposes that subjective norm, attitude toward the behaviour, and perceived behavioural control, are antecedents of intention, and intention is in turn the antecedent of behaviour ((Ajzen 1991) In addition to influencing new venture creation, entrepreneurship education can also have an impact on the performance and growth of new ventures (Raposo & do Paço 2011).

Most of the training participants in CEED's EE programme reported high levels of intention to start businesses. Some of these trainees indicated their interests to start new businesses once they completed their mandatory one-year national service, after graduation. A number of past trainees had already started businesses, but this latter category comprise mainly of those who benefited directly from the limited spaces available in the incubation units operated by the centre within the university. It appears in this case that actual venture creation is more associated with the availability of incubation units, and not just the training in isolation. This raises the question as to whether intention alone, without venture capital and other essential support mechanisms, is a sufficient predictor of new venture creation, sustainability and growth. The interviewees in this study, including those who have started businesses, all highlighted the need for government and institutional support for aspiring and nascent entrepreneurs.

Poverty reduction

Entrepreneurship can have significant positive impacts on poverty reduction through job creation and harnessing of market opportunities for economic growth (Brixiova 2010). This potentially transformative role of entrepreneurs is often hindered by lack of adequate policy and institutional support (Agupusi 2007). While extreme poverty and conflict situations can be challenging, they also present entrepreneurs with unique opportunities to take advantage of new opportunities and contribute to poverty alleviation and conflict mitigation agendas (Tobias et al. 2013). It is not clear how entrepreneurship education can contribute directly to poverty and conflict reduction. However, by contributing to skill development and influencing entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurship education can have a significant, if indirect, impact on poverty alleviation and conflict mitigation.

Majority of new businesses formed by trainees have grown to absorb new employees, with some employing as many as 8 new workers. This impact on job creation is also a direct impact on poverty numbers, as those newly employed workers would otherwise be left unemployed and poor. Furthermore, many of these new entrepreneurs have ambitious plans to expand their businesses to other towns and cities, employing more people in the process. Some of them showed high levels of awareness of how their entrepreneurial activity is beneficial to the wider society. The interviewees also expressed the view that the Boko Haram insurgency is aggravated by high levels of youth unemployment, with some referencing the popular quote that "an idle hand is the devil's workshop". Nevertheless, there is general frustration with the way the insurgency is affecting businesses and the lack of government support for nascent entrepreneurs.

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5. The CEED story

5.1 *The beginning: partnership for staff development*

CEED was founded in response to a 2007 directive of the Federal Government of Nigeria that all Universities should establish centres for entrepreneurship development as a matter of urgency. The aim of this government directive was to improve the capacity of youth to develop entrepreneurial mindset as well as acquire vocational skills, as part of the strategy to stimulate venture creation and curb rising graduate unemployment. Shortly after this, around 2009, the Central Bank of Nigeria embarked on a programme of interventions in six public universities- one in each of the six geo-political zones of the country. The University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID) was selected for the Northeast zone. UNIMAID was asked to choose a project on which to spend the 500million Naira¹, and the university indicated their plan to build a centre for entrepreneurship development. The building was opened in March 2011. However, although the physical facility was ready, with rooms for offices, lectures and practical demonstrations, there was no content, and no curriculum for the entrepreneurship training to take off:

We (from the University of Wolverhampton) went there for one month, to work with them at the CEED. I went over there; my colleague Rebecca came over later. They had the building but no content whatsoever. This was October 2013. There were two parts to the partnership: One was to understand local condition; two was to engage with academic capacity building, and students' engagement. The entrepreneurs they were seeking to create were from the student population (Birch 2015).

Before the October 2013 visit of the experts from the University of Wolverhampton, CEED's staff made several rounds of training visits to the University of Wolverhampton, starting with a workshop in October 2012, and including a 28-day long intensive training in May 2013:

We looked at every sector, went to business networking events and looked at various sectors. For example, we went to Birmingham to look at women in construction with Pirelli, women in engineering with jaguar Land Rover. We had a focus on gender balancing; we also looked at business generation. We also looked at the University's graduate incubation programme in Wolverhampton. We interviewed and interacted with a wide range of experts in the academia and businesses, science park managers and so on. Even when we were at dinner at night, we still had discussions around: how will you improve that business? So there was a lot around marketing/sales trajectory to it (Birch 2015).

5.2 *Curriculum approach and structure*

The operational structure of the centre consists of the Director at the head of all activities, assisted by the Deputy Director. Next in the hierarchy are the head of vocational units- Computer/ICT; Fabric/Fashion Design, Metal Work, Construction, Fishery, and Bakery.

The entrepreneurship curriculum at CEED incorporates elements of classroom-style lectures, as well as practical instructions on particular vocations. This is in consonance with Fayolle et al. (2006)'s highlight of lecture-style and “learning by doing” approaches to entrepreneurship education. The entrepreneurship course is compulsory for all enrolled students in their third

¹ As of 2009/2010 when this fund was disbursed, 500million Naira was the equivalent of £2.5million

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and fourth years². Students went through lecture sessions in Business Planning, Risk Analysis, Book Keeping, and Marketing, among others. Following this each student selects a vocational area on which they then undergo three months of practical training at their chosen unit in the centre. The module is assessed through a combination of written tests, oral examination and practical demonstration of skills learned. The marks from all components are computed for the overall course grade.

A key component of the centre’s provision is the Business Incubation Unit, which is modelled after the incubation unit at the University of Wolverhampton:

...we have different types of business incubation units (at the University of Wolverhampton). There is a specific programme of graduate enterprise that people can apply for. Or you simply apply for office place, based on normal commercial rates in town. This university has generated about 75 businesses in the graduate scheme over the last five years. You apply for the SPEED programme. This gives you training and two mentors for a 12-month period. Trainings are incorporated into this scheme, and you are given a hot desk. And you have an academic mentor and a business mentor, as well as a funding of about £3,500, basically to spend around marketing materials, website, business development and sales drive. And you are given every opportunity by the University to promote yourself. The SPEED programme was heavily promoted (Birch 2015).

Presently the centre at UNIMAID has limited spaces to host 45 businesses in the incubation unit. Funding support is highly restricted, but all 45 spaces are running. Other graduates from the centre have explored opportunities outside the University.

5.3 Promoting venture creation

The centre was, in their research for an international partner, especially keen on developing capabilities for transforming academic knowledge into profitable business:

Considering we had explored a number of options with various universities, what finally convinced us about the University of Wolverhampton is the kind of thing Business Solutions is doing, with regard to their liaisons with academics, to see how academic knowledge can be transformed into business (Sugaba 2013).

In accordance with this priority area of interest, the partnership focused on harnessing existing facilities to optimise opportunities, as well as explore new areas for profitable business:

They had some facilities for skills centre for craft level sort of skill before we got there- bakery, bricklayers, etc, which are not inappropriate for the region. We had conversations with them around sustainability and how to survive, for example with limited electricity. So what we did was to raise the commercial value of some of the businesses. One of the most successful businesses we created was a fresh water fish pump. That was breeding cat fish. So we will take a small river, take cat fish from the river; put them within an intensive farmland on the centre. We excavated land, put in lakes, water flows, on the centre. It is the most successful business we have now. A fish farm in a sub-Saharan region, I don’t think it’s too shabby. Because the value of fish is high, the demand is high, availability is low. So within the business canvas, you are meeting the needs of revenue generation and job creation (Birch 2015)

² A typical undergraduate programme in a Nigerian university runs for 4 years. Engineering, Pharmacy, Agriculture and Law programmes last 5 years, with courses in Medicine taking 6 years to complete.

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Thus the centre was, in effect, generating revenue and employing people from the community, in addition to providing training for students. The students who went on to get slots at the incubation units, as well as others who started new businesses outside the university, recounted how the training has helped them to survive and thrive in their new ventures. Some of them revealed high levels of ambition to grow and expand, while others expressed frustration at the lack of capital to grow their businesses;

The training helped me a lot as I gained a lot of knowledge about business strategy. Before the training at the University of Maiduguri I did not have much knowledge about the business. I know better now how to plan, invest my money, and motivate our customers (Trainee 01)

I plan to expand to other locations where there is good demand for my goods. I want to start new branches in Kano, in Yobe (because Yobe is near Maiduguri). I will have another in maybe Bauchi, which is also near. I hope to employ like 50 people in the next four years (Trainee 01)

...But you know, actually I have not been able to expand my business much because we don't have capital... For now I have only one branch. I want to have like five branches within my locality. If possible I also want to expand my business to other states within Nigeria. I also want to employ more people (Trainee 04)

I have not started a business of my own yet, but I plan to do so. My problem is that I don't have Business capital (Trainee 05)

5.4 Prospects for conflict mitigation

The Boko Haram insurgency has changed people's lives and businesses, not only in Maiduguri, but in the entire Northeast region. Businesses have had to shut down, move locations, or adopt new strategies. Some of the trainees highlighted how the training has helped them to cope and thrive amid the insurgency.

The training helped me to advertise my business differently. So I went to the small hamlets and villages to get people to sell and buy my goods. Sometimes I give them my complimentary cards, encouraging them to call me. I also offer discounts for the retailers, to encourage them (Trainee 01).

Others expressed their views on how poverty and illiteracy have caused and aggravated the insurgency, and how entrepreneurship can help mitigate the crisis by providing opportunities for employment and poverty reduction

The reason why Boko Haram has gained a lot of followers is because some people are jobless and others are illiterate. It is interesting that many of the original members of Boko Haram are students from various higher institutions. Poverty has contributed a lot to the Boko Haram problem (Trainee 01).

I think part of the problem we have is that people who are poor and illiterate are vulnerable to Boko Haram propaganda about education. Illiteracy and poverty is a big problem. Entrepreneurship can help people see possibilities of what education can do to empower people so that they can fend for themselves (Trainee 02).

You know they say that idleness is the devil's workshop. The people Boko Haram is recruiting are idle people. I believe there are a lot of opportunities in society, but such are not being used. With

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entrepreneurship education people will learn to do things for themselves, so they won't be idle any longer (Trainee 05).

The views of the trainees is consistent with the findings of Strong (2009) and Tobias et al. (2013) that entrepreneurial opportunities can bring about positive social change and have a transformative impact on conflict situations. In this case, the trainees- who have themselves been touched by the scourge of terrorist violence- are saying that entrepreneurial opportunities bring a sense of ownership and responsibility in the youth, a sense of dignity and a positive outlook. These, in turn make the youth more resistant to Boko Haram propaganda, transforming them from potential recruits for terrorism into positive agents for social and economic progress.

6. Conclusions

This study contributes to the human capital theory on how entrepreneurship education can create awareness about opportunities for new venture creation, as well as equip aspiring entrepreneurs with relevant skills to succeed as business owners, especially in a conflict environment. The study shows that entrepreneurship education has contributed to awareness and skill acquisitions of participants, and these have in turn contributed to the set-up and expansion of new enterprises. In terms of policy impact, the findings reinforce the view that entrepreneurship education is an effective strategy to promote self-employment, and thereby reduce widespread poverty and graduate unemployment in Northeast Nigeria. Also, the exposure- provided in the training- to entrepreneurial opportunities has the potential to mitigate conflict by drawing young people away from the influence of Boko Haram terror group to more productive and positive activities as entrepreneurs.

However, the study also indicate that majority of the training participants who have gone on to establish thriving businesses are those who have benefitted from additional support, for example in terms of spaces in the university's incubation units. Thus, while findings from the case study support the theory that entrepreneurship education contributes to new venture creation, it appears that it is not always a sufficient antecedent, taking in isolation from other factors, especially venture capital and institutional support. Moreover, this study is limited by its focus on entrepreneurship education provided in a university environment to university undergraduates, recent graduates and generally, participants with post-secondary education.

Therefore, there is a need, in the overarching context of combating poverty and mitigating conflict, to investigate an expanded entrepreneurship training provision to young people with basic or little education. These less educated youth constitute a significant majority of the population, and are more vulnerable to Boko Haram propaganda. Furthermore, future research can explore the mediating and moderating impact of venture capital on the success of entrepreneurship education, in terms of creation and growth of new ventures. There is also a need for further illumination on the role of government policies, with respect to capacity building, facilitation of inter-sectoral linkages, and quality assurance and monitoring of entrepreneurship education programmes in the country.

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